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# BOY'S-EYE VIEWS

OF



THE

# SUNDAY-SCHOOL





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# Boy's-Eye Views of the Sunday-school

*Wm. D. Rogers.*

By Pucker, *friend.*



The Sunday School Times Company  
Philadelphia

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## DEDICATION

*To the Congregational Sunday-school at Medford, Oklahoma, where most of these plans were tried, in whole or in part, and where much experimenting was borne with Christlike patience, this little book is lovingly dedicated.*





## INTRODUCTION

The editor of the *Worker* asked me one time if I couldn't write something for his paper. I told him I couldn't do it, because I hated to write essays so. He said he didn't want any essays, but for me just to tell about the Sunday-schools I have been to and how I liked them.

I could tell more about how I didn't like some of them. He said that would do, too, if I didn't get pessimistic (that means forgetting about all the good things, you know).

So, "for the good of the cause," as Brother Parker says, I started in. Every month I would write some about our Sunday-school, or some other one, and he would put it in the *Worker*. I thought of more things to write than ever I supposed I could. You see there was new things happening all the time, and I just told about them as they happened.

After a while he said to me one day, "Pucker, how would you like to have the pieces you have written about the Sunday-school made into a book?" I told him there wasn't enough of it yet to make a book, but he said there was, and so that's how this book came. If you will read it, perhaps you will find some things your school could try.

Yours,

PUCKER.

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## CHAPTER I

### VACATIONS

First, I'll tell about the Sunday-school I go to now. It's a school in a town in Oklahoma, but you needn't try to guess the name of that town, for it isn't the one you think it is.

Ours is what they call an evergreen school, and in some ways it's a mighty appropriate name, for they're awful green about what boys like. But that isn't what evergreen means. It means a Sunday-school that don't have any vacations.

I like vacations myself, and our preacher does, too. He gets a whole month every year. But our Sunday-school don't take any vacation, not even for Christmas. But of course we couldn't then, for that would knock out having any Christmas tree, or arch, or balloon, or windmill, or whatever they want to have.

I used to belong to a Sunday-school that had a vacation every summer. It was down in Texas, and they have vacation in summer because it is

so hot, just like day-school does. But I've got a cousin up in Iowa that belongs to a Union school that takes its vacation all winter because it gets so cold.



*"They're  
awful green  
about what  
boys like."*

I suppose the farther north you go the longer winter vacation they have, and the farther south you go the longer summer vacation they have, till at the north pole it's all winter vacation, and at the Panama canal it's all summer vacation.

I've figured out that our school must be just half-way between, and that's the reason we don't get any of either kind.

The only trouble with a Sunday-school vacation is that the lessons don't take any vacation. They go right on just the same. Down in Texas our school let out right after Children's Day, when we was studying about Joseph being sold into Egypt, you know, and getting to be next highest to the king, and when we started in again, the first of October, the lessons was about Paul's missionary journeys, and I never did know how Joseph came out or where Paul came from.

If the lessons don't take any vacation I don't think the schools ought to either. How would you feel in day-school if you came back after vacation and found that most of the class had been going on all summer, and were way over into fractions, and you just couldn't understand how fractions could be, let alone adding them? I guess you'd wish you hadn't taken any vacation. I saw in our Sunday-school paper where it said schools should be evergreen and teachers nevergreen, and I think so too.

My cousin in Iowa says he had to go to day-

school in that schoolhouse all winter, if it was cold. I thought that was mighty queer. If they couldn't keep warm one hour on Sunday, how could they ever keep warm five hours a day the rest of the week?

My father says our Sunday-school came awful near quitting one summer, when he used to live here before I was born, and before we went to Texas. He says if it hadn't been for Deacon Taft it would have quit. But when they was going to vote on it, Deacon Taft says: "You can shut up the school if you want to, but you'll find me here on the door-step every Sunday morning studying the lesson." So they talked a while longer, and finally voted not to quit. I guess all it takes to keep a school evergreen is one person that is just bound it shan't quit.



## CHAPTER II

### BEGINNERS

There's another good thing about our school besides its being evergreen, and that's the way they treat the babies. I don't mean the little bits of babies that are on the Cradle Roll, but the little fellers just big enough to sit up and not big enough to read.

Our church hasn't got any Rockefeller in it, and can't afford to have but just one room. But the primary teacher and Brother Parker put up a wire across the choir corner and hung a curtain on it made out of some kind of cloth like mother's old wash-day dress. That makes another room, as far as seeing goes, but of course don't help the noise any.

Then they have a lot of little red chairs, just right for the little fellers to sit on, and before Sunday-school they move the choir chairs and put the little red ones up there, all ready. Of course every little shaver has got some kind of a little chair of his own at home, and so when

he comes to Sunday-school he feels right at home there.

One Sunday I went with Whacker Johnson to visit his Sunday-school. Whacker's father is the preacher, and Whacker says his father thinks sermons are more important than just boys and girls, and he writes sermons till he don't have time to think about Sunday-school. If he would



*"Just stick them up on the front seat."*

just give them an old sermon once, and then think about Sunday-school, he would find out how many good things there is to have and how many of them his school hasn't got.

They don't have any curtain, nor little chairs, nor nothing for their little tads. They just stick them up on the front seat, where they can't rest their backs, nor touch the floor, nor nothing; and if they get tired and twist around they fall off. When I saw them there so uncomfortable-like, some of them leaning 'way back, with their feet sticking straight out in front, and some of them sitting on the very edge, just ready to slip off,

with their little feet hanging down and feeling all full of pins and needles, I felt sorry for them. I thought, how would grown folks like to sit on seats twice too big for them all over? How could they expect to listen to the sermon if their backs ached and their feet was asleep? If we had giant seats in our church, I bet the Ladies' Aid would meet quicker'n scat Monday afternoon and get up an oyster supper to get smaller ones. I know a lot of people that wouldn't come to church any more till they did get them.

Then I thought of little Dickie Mason, and how cute he looks on Sunday in a little red coat and red stockings, sitting on that little red chair, just as comfortable as if he was at home. He thinks that



*"If we had giant seats  
in our church."*

chair belongs to him. Why, after Sunday-school he goes and gets it and takes it down to his mother, and she puts it in between the pews and lets him sit on it all through church.

Then, over to Whacker's school they have all

sizes together. There was Susie Green, in the fourth grade in day-school, sitting alongside of little Paul Riley, who isn't old enough to go to school at all. The teacher had Susie read most all the verses, and didn't pay hardly a bit of attention to Paul and the other little kids. In our school, as soon as you can read you get promoted from the little red chairs to the juniors, on a bench back of the stove.

But the little chairs and the curtain isn't the best thing about our primary class. They have a lesson of their own that fits their minds just the same as the little chairs do their legs. How could you expect little folks to like to learn big folks' lessons any more than they do sitting in big folks' chairs?

The lessons they use is the Beginners' Course, and instead of studying about Ezekiel and Zedekiah and Belshazzar they learn about Adam and Eve, God making trees and things and taking care of people. Then they have pictures of the lessons, and lesson songs and stories. It's more like play than learning, but my little brother Jim knows more about those lessons than you'd think a little kid like him could learn.

Brother Parker said the Beginners' Course was a part of the International Lesson System (that's what most everybody studies, you know), but the Lesson Committee gets them up extra for the babies. Seems to me it took them a long time to think of it, for they didn't have any extra baby lessons when I was a kid.

I expect you are wondering how they can sing those lesson songs with nothing but a curtain between them and the other classes. Well, they do, all right. Why, sometimes the Bible class makes so much noise that you could pretty near holler right out and nobody could hear it.

But they sing those songs in a whisper. Did you know you could whisper a tune? Well, you just try it once and see. It isn't very pretty music,—sounds like the whole class had got a bad cold,—but it pleases the little kids and teaches them the songs, for after they have learned to whisper a song, tune and all, they can sing it out loud without any practise. Sometimes after the lesson the superintendent pulls the curtain back to one end of the wire and has the babies sing a song out loud, and I tell you they do it fine. You just ought to hear them.

## CHAPTER III

### A BIBLE CHRISTMAS

I've just got to tell you about the Christmas we had down to our church. It was a heap different from any Christmas I ever saw before. Brother Parker hatched it up. At first we didn't think it was any good at all, but when it was over we decided in our class that it was the most fun we ever had at Christmas. And I guess all the other classes thought so, too.

You know generally for Christmas you have a tree, or a windmill, or a fire-place, or something like that.

Sometimes everybody brings presents and hangs them on the tree for their kids and all their friends. But you never get what you want. One year, down in Texas, there was seven children in one family. Their father was away from home, and their mother hardly ever went to church, and those kids never got a single thing. You ought to have heard them howl when Santa Claus passed out the very last doll



and Noah's ark, and never had one for them. I guess everybody else felt like crying some too, and even I had to sniff my nose once or twice, thinking about how if it was me. I'd have given them some of my presents only they was all girls and wouldn't have any use for my ball and bat or watch chain. Some of the teachers did give them something, but they never came back to that school any more, and I don't blame them.

If you don't have presents they give you a skeeter netting bag or sock with about a nickel's worth of mixed candy and a few nuts in it, and sometimes an orange that you can't eat till you get home, and by that time you're so full of candy and popcorn you don't want it.

This year we had what Brother Parker called a Bible Christmas. He said a Bible Christmas was a giving Christmas. He said the person who was having the birthday always got the presents from the other people, and as it was Jesus' birthday we ought to give things to him that day, instead of getting things, like it was our birthday.

He talked a long time one Sunday and told lots of Bible verses about giving, and finally the school voted to do it. Our class didn't vote very

loud for we couldn't see any fun in it. But there was, all right.

Brother Parker said the way to give to Jesus was to give to somebody that was in trouble. So we decided to make some things for the orphan asylum. Each class was to make something, but they mustn't let any of the other classes know what they was making till that night.

It was heaps of fun meeting at the teacher's house and deciding what to make, and she let us decide it, and make motions and second them ourselves, just like they do at the high school literary society.

And then it was lots of fun having a class secret. Every morning when we got to school we'd look at each other and say, "You know," and then we'd all laugh and go off, for fear we might tell. It was just like belonging to a club.

Then every night after school we would scatter and each one go a different way so they wouldn't know we was all going down to our barn to work on it. Why, one night Bulldog Jones came down the alley and instead of climbing the fence like the rest of us did, he crawled under the barn



and came right up through a rotten board in the floor. It was most like being a detective, only just the opposite, for we was trying not to be detected.

Well, when Christmas night came we all went



*"Came right up through a rotten board  
in the floor."*

to the church, and I never saw it look so pretty in all my life.

There wasn't any tree, but all around the room was candles—ninety-six of them I counted. They was in the windows, on the pulpit, organ, library, in brackets on the wall, just everywhere, and it

made the church as bright inside as the saloon down on the corner.

Of course, there was Christmas mottoes and a star, but they had giving mottoes, too. Right opposite "Merry Christmas" was "It is More Blessed to Give Than to Receive," and under "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men" it said, "The Lord Loveth a Cheerful Giver."

All the songs were about giving, the superintendent read in the Bible about the Wise-men giving presents to Jesus, there was speaking and exercises by the classes, and Brother Parker made a talk about giving ourselves to Jesus. All the people said it was a good talk, but I was mighty glad it was short for it made you feel so kind of mean, and I couldn't hardly wait for what was coming next.

Pretty soon it was time to bring out the things the classes had made, and everybody was stretching their necks and rubbering to see what it would be. And the old folks was worse than the kids about rubbering.

The girls of course had made dolls and hemmed handkerchiefs and such-like stuff; the young ladies' class had made a quilt and some

pillows; the Bible class had brought a big newspaper holder; the young men had made a book-case; and even the baby class brought a scrap-book.

But what our class gave was the very best of all. It was a long, low bench, with a box under it the whole length. Inside the box was lots of shoe-brushes and boxes of blacking, and the little orphan boys can use the bench part to black their shoes on Saturday nights for Sundays.

Bulldog Jones thought of it. He said he saw one once in a magazine advertisement. He said he didn't have much use for it himself, but that we ought to see that those orphans was brought up right.

Each class took its present up and unwrapped it and put it on the table; then Brother Parker prayed over the things, that the orphans would like them, and that Jesus would know that we meant them for him.

Then we sang "Joy to the World," and as we went out each one got a Christmas card with a Bible verse on it. My verse was "Love seeketh not her own."

I vote for that kind of a Christmas every year.

## CHAPTER IV

### OUR SUPERINTENDENT

We had election of officers in our school the other Sunday for the new year. Of course they elected the same old superintendent again, for they all think there isn't anybody else will have it. I bet some of them would if they ever got a chance.

I don't think much of our superintendent. He may be all right for a Sunday-school, but he sure never would do in a football game. Why, he would always do the very same thing with the ball that he did last time, and before he got started the whole of the other team would be on top of him. I tell you, you've got to have some life to play football. You can't have just any old walking corpse on your team.

I heard our superintendent say once that he was born the same year that gold was discovered in California. If he was, it looks like he would have caught the fever and would discover something new for the opening exercises of our school.

But it's always the same old thing. There isn't a boy in our class but could get up and run the school just the way he does, from "We will open our school this morning by the use of hymn Number 69," to "The teachers will now take their classes." We don't have to listen, for we always know just what is coming next.

He don't even have to tell us how to read the lesson, for he seems to think there isn't but one way it can be read. "Read the lesson," means for him to read one verse and we read the next, and so on; you know how.

I've been to this school more than a year now, and he's never read it any other way yet. Bumps Brown wanted to bet his watch against my bird-dog pup that he wouldn't read the lesson any other way before summer vacation. But I don't bet, at least not when it's a dead sure thing I lose.

Our class knows who would make a good superintendent, and he would take it, too, because we asked him one day. But they never give us a chance to say nothing on election Sunday. If it wasn't for our teacher and Brother Parker, a lot of the boys in our class say they'd quit and go to the Baptist.

I'm mighty glad Conference let him come back this year, for I'd hate to have our class run down like the Bible class was before Brother Parker came. There was only three members, and two of them didn't come very regular.

I expect I would be the one in our class that would have to come every Sunday anyhow, because my father's the class leader and mother teaches the young ladies' class, and I just know they wouldn't never let me stay at home or go to any other school.

I bet if our class broke up they'd even put me in that old class of girls, and I'd have to sit alongside of Mayme Whitney and hear the silly things talk about parties and dresses and such stuff.

The Baptist school has got a fine superintendent. He looks like he was just a young fellow, but he's editor of the paper and secretary of the school board and sends the telegrams to the Wichita papers when anybody gets killed or there is a cyclone or anything else interesting.

Jim Purdy goes to that Sunday-school, and tells us all about it at recess. Jim don't care nothing for Sunday-school. He says he just goes for the fun of it, to see what in thunder they



will do next.. (That isn't swearing.) He says their superintendent believes in running their Sunday-school the way he runs his paper, and that if he didn't get something new in his paper once in a while nobody would take it.

Jim says you never know how they are going to start that school. Sometimes they sing three songs right along, or they may read the lesson first. Sometimes they begin with three or four prayers, and once in a while the superintendent will tell a story first of all, that somehow shows how things just like the lesson are happening now.

And after they get started you never know what is coming next. Perhaps it's a song or a prayer, or maybe Bible verses or a review of the last lesson, or just anything. Jim says it's like a three-ring circus, you have to watch every minute or you miss something.

My father says he thinks they carry it too far making the Sunday-school like a circus, but Jim didn't mean like a real circus, but just that it's interesting.

Jim Purdy's father is engineer on the Flyer, and sometimes Jim goes with him on the engine.

Jim says maybe he will take me with him some day. He says it will nearly take my breath away, but he says nothing slow for him, and I say so too.

Over at the Baptist they read the lesson a different way nearly every Sunday. Sometimes one person will read it all, and all the rest of them will just sit and listen. Sometimes the whole school reads it together. But Jim says the best is when they divide it up like a dialogue, all the boys read what the men in the lesson say, all the girls read what the women in the lesson say, and the superintendent reads what comes in between. He says you can get some sense out of it then.

I wish our old superintendent was a Baptist.



## CHAPTER V

### STARTING A HOME DEPARTMENT

We've got messengers in our school. Did you know that? And we're it.

They're part of the Home Department, you know, but I think they're about the biggest part. And it isn't play, neither, but the real thing, all right.

You know a Home Department is for old folks and sick folks, and anybody that can't come to Sunday-school. Only I believe some in our Home Department could come if they wanted to.

But I think the Home Department is a good thing just the same, because lots of them really can't come, and maybe if the rest of them keep on studying the lessons they will get interested by and by, and then they will come.

Our Home Department was started about a year ago, and it was like this:

My mother went to a big Sunday-school convention at Guthrie, and when she came back she said we just had to have a new thing called a

Home Department that she heard about at the convention.

She said one afternoon a big bald-headed man got up to make a spiel about something. She didn't listen much at first, because she hadn't heard his name and didn't know what he was going to talk about, and was most tired to death anyway.

But pretty soon some one sung out that he was the Field Secretary's father. At that, she says everybody clapped their hands, and she waked up and began to listen with both ears, and never missed another word.

She says he just told them they wasn't doing their whole duty unless they took the open Bible to them what can't come to Sunday-school, and that they could do it by starting a Home Department, and how if they didn't do it they wasn't obeying that place in the Bible where it says: "Go everywhere and take the Gospel to everybody." And she said she just decided then and there to do it for our school.

She sent to the place where we always get our quarterlies and got a lot of samples and things and some Home Department quarterlies.

Then she kept thinking about it and hating it, like I hate doing the chores, till that quarter was gone and those quarterlies was no more good than an invitation to a party that's already over. Then she had to get some new ones.

Finally she started out, and she took me along with her, to kind of brace her up I guess. She said she would only go to Widow Smith and old man Mosely, what can't walk on account of the rheumatiz, and then she would do some more some other day.

Well, it was better than a circus to see mother drag her feet up to old Widow Smith's door. She looked just like that young book agent that came to our house to sell father the life of Bob Ingersoll. I guess with all her teaching in the Sunday-school mother hasn't been doing very much inviting lately, or she wouldn't hate it like she did.

But old Mrs. Smith was real pleasant, and after they had talked about the weather for half an hour mother finally told her what she had come for; how the Sunday-school wanted her to be a member, even if she couldn't come, and how they would bring her a quarterly every

quarter, and she could study the lesson at home every week just the same.

And then old Mrs. Smith just reached out her hand and got hold of mother's, and says:

"Oh, Sister Henly, you don't know how glad I am for this. I've been just hungry for the Sunday-school. Why," she says, "I've been to Sunday-school ever since I was a little girl, and, altogether, I've been scholar, teacher, and superintendent more than fifty years, but now that I can't get out very regular I thought the Sunday-school had forgot me."

And then she just bawled right out loud, and I looked at mother, and she was beginning to bawl too, and I seen that was no place for me, and I just scooted out and chased an old rooster in from out in the road and wished I hadn't come.

But finally they got over it, and mother came out, with old Mrs. Smith thanking her every step of the way, and we left.

Say, mother couldn't get to the next place quick enough. Old man Mosely didn't bawl any, only grunt at his rheumatiz, but he said he would be real glad to know where the lesson was every

week, and that studying of it would help him to forget his bones. So he took the quarterly and things, and said on some warm, pleasant Sunday he was going to visit the school.

I thought we was going to quit then for that day, but no, sir-ee. Mother was just finding out that she had something people wanted, and she began to like it. So she just hustled home for more quarterlies and envelopes, and before supper we went pretty near all over town.

She said I didn't need to go with her if I didn't want to, but I kind of liked it myself, so I went along.

Altogether we got seventeen members that day. There was only one what wouldn't, and she was nice about it. She said:

"Why, Sister Henly, I don't want to disappoint you, but I don't believe I shall have time. But I will think it over and let you know."

That's what she said, but I knew that what she meant was that she didn't want to, and mother knew it too. You can't fool mother.

I've got to stop now before I get to the real messenger part, but I'll tell about that next time, and it's the best of all.

## CHAPTER VI

### HOME DEPARTMENT MESSENGERS



ELL, I've been waiting a whole month to tell you the rest about us messengers, and now I'm going to do it.

You remember I told you how mother and I started our Home Department, and how we got seventeen members the first day. Well, mother kept right on getting them—sick people, lazy church members, saloon-keepers' wives, the hotel man and his wife, the livery barn man, the telephone girl, the agent down to the depot, and a deaf-and-dumb woman. Brother Parker helped her some, and finally she got fifty-three members.

Mother said she couldn't look after so many and her Sunday-school class too, so she got old Mrs. Smith to be at the head of the Home Department, and they appointed our class to be messengers, to run errands for her and carry



round the quarterlies, because, you know, she can't get round much herself.

There's seven of us. Bulldog Jones is captain, and I'm clerk. Don't that sound fine?

We have blue messenger caps and messenger buttons, but we only wear them when we are "on duty." That means going somewhere for Mrs. Smith or Brother Parker. And we have messenger books, too, with a certificate of enlistment on the front, with our name written in and signed by Brother Parker. On the inside of the back cover there is instructions, too, telling us how to act. Brother Parker made the messenger books and they're almost as good as real store ones.

The instructions say we must be polite and prompt. When we deliver a message we must hold our caps in our left hand and the message in our right. Bulldog Jones didn't like to take off his cap at first. He said it was silly. But he does it now, all right. We told him if he didn't obey the rules he couldn't be captain.

Every Saturday at 9 o'clock we put on our caps and badges and take our messenger books in our pockets, and go to Mrs. Smith's house for

roll-call and orders. We stand up in a row on her front porch with our caps on, and when we are all ready Bulldog Jones knocks on the door. When she comes to the door we all salute, just like soldiers, and then she calls the roll, and we say "Here," instead of "Present." It sounds fine, and like men.

Then we take off our caps and go in, and she tells us what she's got for us to do that day. Sometimes it's to take round invitations for a Home Department social, sometimes it's a birthday letter to some member, or a New-year's greeting to all of them.

Once a quarter we take a new quarterly and a new envelope to each member. They have to sign their name in our messenger book whenever we carry them anything, and we have to get each one to hunt up his old envelope, with his money in it for his offering. Then we take our books to Mrs. Smith and "report" what we did and what people said, and give her the envelopes.

Mrs. Smith makes out a report after we bring back the envelopes, and I have to read that report in Sunday-school every quarter. At first I was



scared to get up and read it, but I don't mind it any now. Bulldog Jones tried to make out like the captain ought to read the report, but Mrs. Smith said: "No, that is part of the duty of the clerk, and the captain is to see that he does it faithfully." I guess there isn't any danger about that.

That report tells how many new members we have got and how much money was in the envelopes, and it has the names of all those that have studied every lesson. Brother Parker has me give those names to him and he prints them on a big sheet of cardboard, with "Roll of Honor" at the top, and hangs it on the wall of the church. At first there wasn't many names on it, but when we told them they would be on the Roll of Honor if they studied every lesson, lots of them began to study and now there's a long list every time.

I tell you, I think messenger boys can do lots of good. And what do you think? Brother Parker said that next summer he was going to take us messengers camping for a whole week. Won't that be great?

## CHAPTER VII

### BLACKBOARDS

I wish our school had a blackboard.

Last Sunday mother went over to the Presbyterian church to tell them about the Hobart convention. They didn't any of them go, you know. And she took me with her. She wasn't to talk till after Sunday-school, because their preacher is away on a vacation and they couldn't have any sermon except her report.

We went over as quick as we could after our Sunday-school was out, and got there before they was done. And what do you think? Their superintendent was reviewing their school on the lesson and putting it on the blackboard, just like he was a real teacher like they have at the schoolhouse on week-days.

Yes sir, up in one part of the blackboard he had a map drawn off. It wasn't a very good map. Mother could have drawn a better one with her left hand. There wasn't nothing to it but a straight line on the top and bottom and

right-hand side, and a wiggly line on the left-hand side, and in the middle two little ponds, with a wiggly river between them. But anybody would know what it was without hardly looking at it.

When we got there he had a boy up to the board trying to put on the mountain where Jesus was transfigured, and where Elijah and Moses came down from heaven, you know, and talked with him. He couldn't seem to get it right at first, but the superintendent kept asking him questions, and finally the boy found the right place.

Then another boy went up and showed where they was for the lesson before, on Peter's great confession. Then a girl went up and drawed a line from one place to the other, to show where they went.

I didn't know where those places was before I went there, 'cause our teacher just has us look at them on a little map in her Bible and we forget them so easy. But I don't believe I shall ever forget those two places I saw on the black-board, honest I don't. Why, I can shut my eyes and see the whole thing any time.

It didn't take but a minute or two to get the lesson on the map. Then the superintendent put six straight marks on the board, and said they was to stand for the people on the mountain at the time of the transfiguration. He asked the whole school for their names, and as fast as anybody gave them he put P over one mark for Peter, and M over one for Moses, and like that, you know. But instead of putting J over Jesus, he made that mark whiter and all shiny-like.

Then he said: "Jesus was in a hard place. He was getting ready to let himself be killed for you and me. And the disciples were in a hard place. They didn't believe Jesus ought to let himself be killed, and they had to change their minds. So God sent down those two from heaven to help Jesus get ready to be killed, and to help the disciples to see that it was God's way to save the world. Don't forget that whenever we get in a hard place, if we ask him, God will send and help us out in some way."

While he was talking he was making marks on the board like this:

III    IIIII    IIIII    JCU

I couldn't think what it was for, till all at once he said: "You can't read this till I put in some other marks to help you out, just as God puts things into our lives to help us understand the hard things." Then he put some level marks and slanting marks onto the up-and-down ones, and made it read:

## HE WILL HELP YOU

Then they sang that song that has for a chorus:

"Ask the Saviour to help you,  
Comfort, strengthen and keep you.  
He is willing to aid you,  
He will carry you through."

I forget what our superintendent said our lesson was for, but I bet I'll never forget that sentence I saw on the board.

Last Thursday I pretty near had a fight with a boy. I won't tell who he was nor what it was about. He made me awful mad and I just wanted to soak him one. I knew I hadn't ought to, but it just seemed like I couldn't help it. Then

all at once I thought of that sentence on the blackboard:

## HE WILL HELP YOU

and I just walked away with my hands in my pockets, like I didn't care.

I don't see why every school don't have a blackboard. Why, they couldn't have a day-school without one. They just couldn't teach a thing, and I don't see why it isn't just as good to teach with in Sunday-school.

And besides, it makes it interesting. 'Course, I go to Sunday-school, anyway, 'cause my father and mother always goes, and I've kind of got used to going regular. But there's lots of fellers my size that don't go.

When I was down to the Hobart convention and heard Mr. Pearce tell about asking boys to come to Sunday-school, you know, I made up my mind I would ask some when I got home. Well, last week I asked Tom McClain to come and be in our class, and he said: "Oh, come off; it's too dry for me."

I bet if we had a blackboard and put the les-



son on it he wouldn't think it was dry. Why, when the superintendent over to the Presbyterian was putting those things on I just couldn't hardly wait to see what was coming next. But I bet if our superintendent tried it he'd put the whole lesson on the board before school began, and there wouldn't be any more excitement in it than there is in three-old-cat. I tell you, if you want to make it interesting you've got to have something new happening all the time.

And it helps to keep order, too. I mean the blackboard does. Why, I never heard such a stillness in a Sunday-school as there was while we was all watching those straight lines, and listening to hear what he would say about them. And I know a Sunday-school where some of that same kind of stillness would be a mighty good thing.

I asked mother, going home, why somebody hadn't thought of a Sunday-school blackboard sooner, and she said they had thought of it more than thirty years ago, but that somehow folks was so busy, or something, that they didn't all of them have any yet. I think that if Sunday-school blackboards was invented thirty years ago,



any school that doesn't have one is about thirty years behind the times.

I told the fellers in our class about it and they said they was going to ask our superintendent why he didn't get a blackboard and get up-to-date. I know what he'll say. He'll say he can't draw. But pshaw! any feller in our class will put on the maps and the marks for him if he'll tell us what to put on.

I forgot to tell you that the Presbyterian school had another smaller board up on the wall that had a big sheet of paper pinned over it. I kept wondering what was behind that sheet of paper.

Pretty soon they called for the secretary's report, and instead of getting up and reading a lot of figures and stuff that you can't half hear nor remember at all, the secretary just got up and said: "We have a fine report to-day." Then she pulled down the sheet of paper, and there it was all wrote down on this little board, like this:

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Present.....49    | Last Sunday.....43   |
| Tardy..... 5      | Last Sunday..... 6   |
| Offering.....67c. | Last Sunday.....50c. |

She had put it on that board when they was all busy studying the lesson, and when she pulled the paper down everybody rubbered at it for about a minute; then they was all ready to sing the last hymn, and anybody could remember a report like that.

Pshaw! I bet there's fifty things you could use the blackboard for if folks would just try.

I asked father how much a blackboard would cost, and he said: "Oh, a couple of dollars or so." I wish our class had some way to earn a couple of dollars.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CAMPING OUT

You remember how Brother Parker promised to take us Home Department messengers camping? Well, he did it; and, say, talk about fun!

Part of the time we made out like we was Indians and part of the time cowboys, and most all of the time hunters. And that wasn't much make-believe, either, 'cause Brother Parker brought a really, truly rifle. Mother didn't hardly want him to, but he said he'd be awful careful and so she let him.

I tell you, it was a good thing she did. Why, there was more snakes to kill, and awful hard to hit with a rifle, too. Then we shot frogs and cooked them for dinner. One day a big snapping-turtle came along the bank, so big we couldn't hardly lift him when he was dead. Brother Parker shot him in the head and right down his neck to his heart, 'cause he might crawl up some night and snap our toes.

But I forgot to tell you the start of it. We

went right after the Fourth of July. It took most a week to get together all the things we was going to need, and fill up the grub box, and load the wagon. But Saturday night we got all loaded and ran the wagon under the shed till Monday morning.

That was the longest Sunday I ever saw. Seemed like night never would come.

Monday morning we all got up at four o'clock, dressed up in our old clothes, hitched up the team, and pulled out at just five o'clock. It wasn't hardly light yet, and seemed awful early.

About seven o'clock we stopped and got breakfast, and then went on. We got to the camping-place about two o'clock. It was right by a creek, and where there was plenty of trees. We couldn't find any spring, but afterward we made one in the bank, like the Indians do, and kept the milk and butter hanging in it.

Well, we put up the tent, made a kind of fire-place out of rocks, and Brother Parker got dinner. I tell you, he can cook all right. Our folks said they didn't know what we was going to eat out there. But my, we had lots better grub than we got at home. We got milk, butter, eggs,

potatoes, roasting ears, chickens, and some of our bread from the houses near us. Brother Parker made flapjacks part of the time and flipped them over in the air like a cowboy taught him once.



*“Made flapjacks and flipped them over in the air like a cowboy.”*

Then we caught lots of fish, and fried frogs' legs and bacon, cooked beans, made mush and lots of other good things. One day we made turtle soup.

We all took turns going for milk, water and things, setting the table, cleaning the fish and washing the dishes. That last was the hardest of all.

We had a good big tent, and that first night we all slept in it, with the flaps down tight. But it was awful hot, and the skeeters got in there and couldn't get out again. They had a regular picnic all night, but we didn't, and after that first night we all took our beds out under the trees, where the breeze would blow all the skeeters off. Pretty soon we got so we didn't mind sleeping outdoors a bit.

And we all learned to swim. Bulldog Jones and Brother Parker knew already, and they taught the rest of us. When we first got there the creek wasn't deep enough to swim in, but we made a dam in a narrow place, out of logs and rocks, with sand all over it, and we could make the water as deep as we wanted to. Sometimes we'd go in swimming twice a day, and I learned to dive and swim on my back, and dog-fashion, and sideways, and everything. I got ducked some, too.

Before we went I didn't see what there would



be to do all the time, but my, there was plenty to do. When we wasn't in swimming, we was fishing, or hunting bullfrogs, or picking sand plums or wild blackberries, or getting wood for the fire, or reading out of some books that Brother Parker brought. There was some fun to have all the time.

But the best was after supper when it began to get dark, and we'd all sit down or lie on the ground around the fire and talk. Brother Parker would tell the best stories about brave men. One night we all told what we thought was the bravest man. After we all said what we thought, about going to war and getting killed, you know, and all that, Brother Parker said he thought the bravest man on earth was the one that kept right on doing what he thought was right when everybody else thought he was doing wrong and blamed him for it.

One night we all told what we was going to be when we was grown up. I said I was going to be a banker. When I said that Brother Parker said then I better study my arithmetic good and hard.

After we'd talked a while, then Brother Parker



would say some verses out of the Bible, like, "Let not your heart be troubled," or that about "lay me down in peace and sleep." Sometimes we'd all together say, "The Lord is my shepherd," and then we'd all shut our eyes, lying right there on the ground round the fire, and Brother Parker would pray a little short prayer that the Lord would take care of us through the dark and look out for the folks at home. It wasn't a bit like the prayers he makes in church, but I liked it. Made you feel kind of good all over. Why, one night he said my old baby prayer, only he said it like this:

"And now we lay us down to sleep,  
We pray the Lord our souls to keep,  
If we should die before we wake,  
We pray the Lord our souls to take.  
And this we ask for Jesus' sake,  
Amen."

The way he said it didn't sound a bit babyish. I just about made up my mind to take to saying it again nights.

On Sunday we all went over to a church about two miles off to Sunday-school. Sometime I'm

going to tell about that Sunday-school. Say, it was fierce.

After Sunday-school Brother Parker preached. All the people seemed to like it, and they was awful nice and sociable to us. They didn't wait to be introduced like they do at our church. They just walked right up and shook hands, and said they was glad to see us.

The next Tuesday a whole lot of them brought their dinners and came down to our camp for a picnic. They asked us to eat dinner with them out of their baskets, and you just bet we did. Why, they had chicken and preserves and jellies, and a whole lot of pie and cake. I thought Bumps Brown would make himself sick. Best of all, when they got ready to go they gave us all the cake and pie left. We had enough to last till we started home.

We got home all right and I've been hungry ever since. I asked Brother Parker if we could go again next year, but he said he didn't know. I hope we do.

## CHAPTER IX

### SALOONS

Two weeks ago we had Temperance Day in our Sunday-school. The Anti-Saloon League told us to, you know, 'cause pretty soon we've got to vote on prohibition for Oklahoma.

We had some special songs by the girls' choir, and some mottoes on the wall about putting a bottle to your neighbor's lips, and "Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity!" and "Neither be partaker of other men's sins," and "Quit you like men, be strong."

Our teacher said as how some men want saloons in a town because they help business. I asked my father if the saloon right next door to his store helped his business any, and what do you suppose he said?

He said, "No sir; it don't." He said, "There's women in this town that won't trade with me just because they hate to go by the door of that saloon, and I get a dollar a month less for my

office rooms upstairs than the man across the street does, just because my stairway goes right up by the saloon." He said, "On Saturday night, when the men come downtown with money in their pockets to buy things for Sunday, they go to the saloon first, and then when they come to the store they only buy a little bit of each thing, and the very cheapest kind." He says that he's got more than a thousand dollars charged on his books that he can't collect just because the men what owe it spend all their extra money in the saloons. He says it don't help his business any, and I shouldn't think it did.

And my father says, "I know another business it don't help any, and that's the business of raising boys. Saloons don't help in raising boys any more than loco weed helps raise horses. And I should think raising boys into good men like Lincoln and McKinley and Roosevelt and Folk was a pretty important business for a town."

If saloons help a town, what makes the town charge them \$500 a year for doing it? It don't look fair to charge folks for helping us, does it?

I don't believe that saloons help any kind of business except the doctor's business and the

sheriff's business and the lawyer's business and the undertaker's business, and especially the saloon business. So there now!

After the lesson that Sunday we all signed the pledge that we wouldn't never drink nor sign a saloon petition nor vote for it. All us boys signed it, but some of the men didn't. Skinny Ross's father never signed it, 'cause he signs saloon petitions. Yes sir, he does.

One time he caught Skinny loafing round the saloon and selling them empty beer bottles, you know, and he fired Skinny home like scat, and, say, maybe you think he didn't warm him up with a strap. But isn't that a funny way to do? When a man asks for a saloon in his town, don't it look like he ought to furnish at least one boy to help support it? It can't run without boys, and he surely wasn't mean enough to ask for a saloon so his neighbor's boys could get drunk when he didn't want his own to. And him a church member, too, and praying that the Lord will build up the work of the church, and then praying to the county clerk to send a saloon to tear down the work of the church. Ain't that funny?

Then there's the license fee. If the saloon is a good thing, it's a shame to tax it like they do. If it's a bad thing and men don't want it without a license fee, why should they change their minds when it pays \$500 a year? Don't it look like the saloon had hired them to change their minds and vote for something they don't want? And isn't that exactly what these bribers try to do at Washington, D. C.?

Maybe that \$500 makes up for the badness of the saloon. The saloon is bad, but the saloon and \$500 to boot is all right. Then the \$500 balances off the harm they are going to do, and by paying the \$500 they get a permit to do the town \$500 worth of harm in a year, because they've already paid the damages beforehand. There has been three stores fail in this town and two men have killed themselves, all on account of the saloons, since we moved here. I guess they have done this town all the harm they paid for, and more too.



## CHAPTER X

### BEGINNING LATE

Let me see. I promised I'd tell about that Sunday-school we went to when we was out camping, didn't I? Well then, here goes.

The school was to be at 2:30 in the afternoon, and then Brother Parker was to preach at 3:30, you know. The schoolhouse was about two miles away, so we hustled dinner over and started about half past one, so as to be sure not to get a tardy mark.

But when we got there there wasn't a single soul in sight. The door wasn't even unlocked yet. So we sat around, and after a while the man came that had the key. He said he saw us there from his house and came over early so as to let us in. And what do you think? It was plumb half past two right then.

Well, after a while the boys and girls began to come on foot and on horseback. Then some wagons drove up with folks in them, and there was quite a crowd in the schoolhouse and out-



side. It got most three o'clock, and they was all ready to begin, but couldn't do anything because the superintendent wasn't there yet.

By and by he came and shook hands all around, like there wasn't any need for starting the school for quite a while yet. Then he went over and asked the girl at the organ to pick out a number to sing, and at five minutes past three they began. We'd been there an hour then, and was most ready to go home.

That wasn't the worst of it, either. They never quit till quarter past four, and by the time Brother Parker had preached his sermon and we had walked the two miles back to camp, it was plumb six o'clock. And we never got the supper dishes washed till dark.

I think if they say they are going to begin at two-thirty they ought to be there and begin, and if they ain't going to begin till five minutes past three, then they ought to set five minutes past three for the hour. I'd have something to go by besides just when the superintendent gets there.

At our school, the organist keeps her eye on the clock all the time and at three minutes before

ten she goes to the organ and gets all ready. When the long hand says it's exactly ten o'clock she plays three long chords on the organ. That's the signal to come to order. Then the superintendent gives out the first hymn and we all stand up and sing.

If the superintendent isn't there when the first chord sounds, the assistant superintendent walks up and takes his place. If the assistant superintendent isn't there the Bible class teacher walks up, and so on. If the organist isn't there at three minutes before ten, the assistant organist goes to the organ, and if she should be sick, Brother Parker's wife goes. She's always there. I'll say this much for our old superintendent, he says that school has got to start on time "tho' the heavens fall." I tell you, that's what takes, too.

Then, in our school, the secretary always calls the roll of officers and teachers. But they don't answer for themselves. When she calls, "Superintendent John J. Smith," the whole school says, "Present." And when she calls, "Organist, Mable Jones," if she isn't there, we all say, "Absent." For a teacher, her class says present

or absent, and if a teacher don't come, she knows her whole class will say, "Absent." I tell you, they're most always there, and they're on time, too. One time we got up kind of late at our house and poked around with breakfast, and we was all late to Sunday-school. When mother got to her class roll-call was all over. And, sir, when that old superintendent saw her coming in after roll-call, he just gave out for the next hymn, "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder I'll Be There." Mother's face got as red as a beet and father looked mad, but I tell you we don't lay abed any more on Sunday mornings.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE SECRETARY

Let me tell you some more about that school we visited when we was out camping. You remember how they began away late. Well, when they finally got started they never made up any time.

The superintendent gave out a hymn and then they had to wait while they passed the books. Then the organist played it all through about as slow as if it was a funeral we was at instead of a Sunday-school. And when, finally, they began to sing it went slower still, like as if the grave wasn't done and they had to make the funeral last till the grave-digger sent word to come on.

Then they read the lesson. Of course they read it the same old way, like we always do in our school. You know how that is.

But the worst was the secretary. She kept running around the room like a merry-go-round broke loose. She never did one thing till the

lesson began, then she went and hunted up the class-books and distributed them. But she forgot the collection envelopes and had to make another trip around with them before the teachers could begin to teach. Then she went and sorted out picture cards for the little folks.

She made another trip around to collect the class-books and envelopes and make up her report. And, last, she counted out as many papers as each class needed, and started to pass them. But before she got clear around she found she had got the wrong date, and had to collect up those she had given out and go back and hunt up the right ones. I tell you, she was a hustler, but she bothered the teachers so they couldn't hardly teach.

The very worst of all was her passing the papers before the classes were done with the lesson. When the warning bell tapped she went and gave a picture paper to every single scholar, and after that the teachers couldn't any more teach than nothing, for the kids looking at the papers. Our teacher didn't try to finish the lesson. She just quit.

In our school our secretary is all right, if

our superintendent is a back number. She's just a young girl, too, but Brother Parker told her how to do. They bought one of those ten-cent school-bags for each class in the school and numbered each bag according to the class it was for. On Saturday she goes to the church and sorts the cards and papers and things, and puts into each bag all the things that class will need—class-book, collection envelope, lesson leaves or new quarterlies, picture papers, and even hymn-books—they're little paper ones, you know.

Then, on Sunday morning, before Sunday-school begins, she goes and leaves each bag where that class always sits, and when school opens they don't have to wait to pass anything. Each teacher just passes to her own class right out of their class bag. That lets the secretary stay in her class till the lesson is most over. Then she goes round the room just once and takes the class-books and envelopes out of the bags, where the teachers have put them back, goes and makes up her report, and then collects the bags when Sunday-school is out. Isn't that better, now? I don't see why all Sunday-schools don't try it.

And do you know when they give us our

papers? You can just bet they don't do it while we are studying the lesson and trying to answer questions. You see the teacher distributes the papers herself, and she leaves them right in the bag till after we've said the Lord's Prayer at the end of school, and then she just takes them out and hands them to us as we go out of the pew. That keeps us from rushing out too soon and keeps the papers from bothering the lesson.

There's lots of different ways of being secretary, isn't there?



## CHAPTER XII

### HAVING FUN

Our teacher was sick last Sunday, and the superintendent got a man what was visiting our school to teach our class. And, say, but we had fun. You'd never guess what his business is. He's a traveling man. Yes sir, he works for a big hardware firm at Kansas City. But he's a Christian, all right, and says he goes to Sunday-school wherever he is on Sunday.

Our teacher is pretty good. I haven't got a word to say against her. She always knows her lesson, and she always has something to make it interesting, like a picture of the place, or a story about some great man that did what the lesson says. She always speaks to us on the street and has us to her home for ice-cream in summer and peanuts in winter. And she's always at Sunday-school, 'less she's sick or something. And she writes nice letters to us on our birthdays. Oh, I tell you, she's all right!

But this traveling man, he didn't seem to think

about being a teacher. He just thought about us. He didn't seem to care for rules, nor order, nor verses, nor nothing but just boys and having a good time, and being manly and brave.

Why, we never hardly knew when he began the lesson. We was all watching to see who they would get to teach us, and when the superintendent asked him he just got right up and came over, kind of smiling, like he was glad, He made the superintendent introduce him to each of us like we was men, and he shook hands all round, and said, "Have you had a good time this last week?"

We kind of grinned, and Bulldog Jones says: "You bet."

Instead of looking shocked he smiled, and said, "That's good. What have you been doing?"

We told him some of the things, and then he said: "Have any of you been in a tight place this week, a place of testing?"

He told how when they make a piece of armor-plate to put on a big battleship they set it up and shoot at it with big cannons, to test it. He said surely some of us had been in some hard place of testing like that this last week.

Then I thought of the time the teacher asked me if I had been whispering, and I wanted to tell her no. When this man looked at me straight and says, "Boys, did you stand the test?" I was mighty glad I had told the teacher the truth, if I did have to stay in.

He told how Jesus was tested in Gethsemane, and before Annas and Caiaphas and the court of seventy elders, and then before Herod and Pilate. I tell you, didn't he have a heap of trials all at once?

He said Jesus had all those trials not to prove whether he was guilty or innocent, but to show us how to bear our hard things.

Then came the fun. He said we could find out how much each other knew about the lesson. Each one could ask a question of any other feller he wanted to, and if that feller could answer, then it was his turn to ask of somebody else. My, how we did shoot 'em at each other. It was more exciting than a ball game. Skinny Ross finally ended it all up and stuck us all by asking of Bulldog Jones, "Who'd want to be Pilate?"

Then we talked about who could help us stand

our trials. We named mother, father, Brother Parker, our teacher, good books, and then the teacher said, "And yourselves." He says, "You've got to do it yourselves. Nobody can do it for you. You've just got to have sand enough to say NO. 'Any softie can go wrong, but it takes sand to keep straight.'"

That made us all hold up our heads. Then he said, "But we can't do it alone, no matter how much sand we have. I can't. You can't. We must hook on to Jesus and let him hook on to us. He will always know how to help us in a tight place, because he went through such tight places himself."

"Boys," he says, "I know this is true, because I've tried it a thousand times and he has never failed me. Won't you every one let him grip on to you to help you forever?"

Just then the bell rang, and I didn't think it was near time yet, neither, but somehow I've been thinking about that ever since.

## CHAPTER XIII

### OUR CHRISTMAS

My, it don't seem like it had been a year since I wrote about the kind of a Christmas we had last year, that time when every class made something, you know, and gave it to somebody else instead of getting anything our own selves. That was a heap of fun, all right, but our Christmas this year beat it all holler. It was a Bible Christmas, and the whole program came right out of the Bible, all but the singing, and that sounded just like the Bible.

Instead of candy bags on a tree, or any old thing like that, we had a school supper. We gave things, too. Every class made something for somebody what needed it. But instead of bringing it into church and showing it off like as if we did it for folks to see, and like we was proud of it, each class never let on it was making anything, and we ain't never, never going to tell anybody what we made nor who got it.

Brother Parker put us on to that game by

talking some kind of a spiel about not doing things to be seen of men like the Pharisees did, and not letting our right hand know what our left hand was doing. But that isn't what I was going to tell about.

'Course we had a lot of committees, and such, and one Sunday about two weeks before Christmas they gave out to every scholar on the roll a ticket like this:

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* * * * *
*          ADMIT _____          *
* to the Christmas Supper of the M. E. *
* Church, in the church at 5:30 P. M., *
* Monday, December 24, 1907.          *
* * * * *

```

Well, of course we all went, and say, what a time! The church was all fixed up with decorations and mottoes and lights, and the whole school was there, and how they did giggle, and how happy it was! Us kids had more fun than the old gray-headed fellers used to at the old settlers' reunions down in Texas.

Pretty soon the committee came round with



plates and sandwiches, pickles, hard-boiled eggs, cheese, and cookies. It was just like a Sunday-school picnic, only it was in the house. Well, we ate and ate and ate, and talked and laughed.



*"It was just like a Sunday-school picnic,  
only it was in the house."*

And the girls they just giggled like they didn't have any sense, but we all had a dandy good time. It was a heap better than just a sack of candy what you can't eat that night because it's



so late, and don't want next day because you've got so much other, better candy, anyhow.

About the time they was all done eating and got the things cleared up and the chairs fixed back where they belonged, the folks began coming to the entertainment. Only Brother Parker says we mustn't call it an entertainment, because it wasn't just to entertain the folks. It was to celebrate Jesus' birthday. He said the supper was a kind of a birthday supper in Jesus' house; and the program was to celebrate his birth.

They had taken the pulpit down and made the platform clean across the end of the church and clean down to the front seat, and the whole school sat on the platform. They was arranged round in circles like a minstrel show, with the little kids in front sitting on the little red chairs and a space in the center for the speakers to stand in. The organ was clear down to one side on the main floor and every seat in the house was full of folks.

My, I wish you could have heard that program. It was fine. First was a song out of the Sunday-school song-book about "The Old, Old Story is True," by all of us. You see, we was

going to tell them that old, old story in the program.

Then the Junior Boys got up, and each one said a short prophecy about Christ. They ran all the way from Adam and Eve to Malachi. Two girls spoke recitations about his coming. One was about, "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse," and the other was, "For unto us a child is born," etc. That was the way it was all through—songs about Christmas out of the song-book and recitations out of the Bible—and it told the whole thing before we got through.

And it was good, too. When all the men and boys in the whole school stood up and sang "Holy Night," or when the little kids in the red chairs piped up with, "Away in a manger, no crib for his bed," I tell you the folks liked it. And when my little brother Jim climbed right up on his chair and spoke, "For God so loved the world," they all just clapped like everything.

One recitation was about the shepherds, just like it is in the Bible, and then we all sang, "While shepherds watched their flocks by night."

Our class spoke about the Wise-men, and then the whole crowd and everybody stood up and sang, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come." That was the end, all but the benediction, that nobody listens to anyhow. I heard most fifty people say it was the interestingest program they had ever heard on a Christmas.

There was only one woman what didn't like it. She was shooting off her mouth after it was over, but mother shut her up pretty quick, I tell you. Mother says to her, "Well, it was all about Jesus, anyhow, not half Jesus and half Santa Claus."

## CHAPTER XIV

### REVIEW

You remember the Sunday after Christmas was Review Sunday. Let me tell you about how we did it in our school. It was a new plan. Of course it was Brother Parker what hatched it up. He said he saw it in a paper somewhere.

Our old superintendent wouldn't have known it was a good plan if he'd seen it. I don't believe he ever reads any papers on Sunday-school work, for fear he might accidentally run on to something new. My, wouldn't it skeer him stiff, though!

There has only been two kinds of reviews in our school since I've been here. About every second Review Sunday, instead of having classes the superintendent would get up in front of the whole school and read the review questions what's printed in the back of the quarterly. 'Course he's got a Senior quarterly, and the questions are full of big words, and too hard, anyhow, about, "In what way does the third verse prove the doctrine of immortality?" and stuff like that.

Most of the fellers in our class played hookey when they thought we was going to have that kind of a review. I wanted to skin out myself, but mother wouldn't let me. She says it would be a bad example. Shoot example, anyway!

The rest of the Review Sundays the superintendent never says nothing, and the teachers do just as they please. Our teacher generally has some kind of a scheme to get answers out of us, but most of the lessons are so far back that we've forgot that we ever had them, and mostly we have to say we can't remember. That makes teacher look sad, and then we hate ourselves and wish we was home. One kind of review is just about as bad as the other. You pays your money and takes your choice.

But this last time they had something different, and there didn't any of us know what it was going to be till we got there. The opening exercises was about the same old drag. Then the superintendent says: "Brother Parker has got up some review questions of his own this time, one for each class." Then Brother Parker had two boys pass round and give each teacher her question on a slip of paper. The question was

for the whole class, and we had fifteen minutes for the classes to fix up their answers.

Our question was, "Name some of the miracles of Jesus." You see, we was just getting done with studying the whole life of Jesus for a year, so the questions wasn't just on the quarter's lessons, but on the life of Jesus. I think that's a heap better way anyhow.

Well, we named over all the miracles we could think of,—water into wine, nobleman's son, Jairus's daughter, raising that widow's boy down in some town, feeding the crowd on the little feller's lunch, helping them catch a big mess of fish, raising Lazarus, fixing that feller's ear. I never could remember his name, but I know he got his ear cut off and Jesus fixed it. Teacher made Skinny Ross write down all we named, and said when we was called for he should read the list and that would be our answer. My, I was glad it wasn't me.

Pretty soon the fifteen minutes was up. The superintendent slammed the bell a couple of times, and we came to order. That's what the superintendent called it, but I didn't see anybody what had been out of order. We'd all been doing



what we was told to do. Isn't that order? We sang a song to fill in, and then the superintendent called the questions and somebody in each class got up and read the answer they had fixed up.

I can't remember what all of it was about. I know one class tried to name Jesus' friends and clean forgot to put in John and Peter and the rest of the apostles. But that was only a girls' class. Most every class answered right, and Brother Parker made a little speech about how pleased he was with the year's work and how much we knew about Jesus. But he said the main thing was to know Jesus himself, the real live Jesus, as a friend that we couldn't see, but that was right with us all the time to help us, and that we could talk to him just like to your mother and he would hear you. That sounded a little fishy to me, but the big folks and the little kids just opened their mouths and took it in.

Then we had election of officers. Us fellers was all dying to vote for a new superintendent, but no, sir. Nobody but the same old stick was put up, and so he's it for another year. Wish I could go to some other school, only for Brother Parker and our teacher.



## CHAPTER XV

### CRADLE ROLL

I believe I haven't ever told anything yet about our baby roll. Cradle Roll is what they call it at our Sunday-school, but baby roll is its real name, 'cause that's exactly what it is, a roll of all the babies that have joined our Sunday-school before they were old enough to come to it.

I think it would be a whole lot better to call it baby roll and be done with it. Then folks would know right off just what you were talking about. When they first planned to have one in our school, Brother Parker made a talk about it and asked how many had ever seen a Cradle Roll, and one old man said:

"I don't believe my old woman knows how to bake 'em." I guess he thought it was some kind of a biscuit.

Our Cradle Roll started all of a sudden. They was holding a township convention at our church. The county president was there, and he made a talk about having a Cradle Roll. Then

he stopped and looked all around the walls like he was looking for something. Pretty soon he says:

"Where is it?"

Mother says: "What?"

"Why, your Cradle Roll," says he.

"Well, we haven't got round to start it yet," says mother.

"Why not start it right now?" says the president.

"I would if I knew how," she says.

So he tells her how, and she takes a sheet of paper out of the secretary's book and goes round the room to all the Methodist people what had little babies, got them to say the baby could join the roll, put down the babies' names, and when their birthday was, and then you see she had a Cradle Roll.

She got five of them that afternoon. After the meeting was out at four-thirty she hustled out and got three more. Right after supper she left the dishes and got out some kind of velvet stuff and made a banner. She cut eight stars out of white cardboard,—the six-pointed kind,

'cause she don't know how to make a five-pointed star. I bet I could have showed her.

She wrote a baby's name on each star and pinned the stars round on the banner. Then she pasted some gilt letters along on top of the banner, so that they spelled CRADLE ROLL, fixed a loop at each top corner, and when they began the meeting that night she had it all tacked up on the wall.

The president saw it right off, and when they had sung a while he read off the babies' names and says:

"No one can tell what God may do through some of these that this day are enrolled as part of this Sunday-school. He may have another D. L. Moody or a Frances E. Willard, whom he is just beginning to prepare in this way."

Then he prayed for the Cradle Roll babies and their fathers and mothers, and told the Lord he hoped the Sunday-school would never forget to love and look after these little lambs. I was sitting right next to one baby's mother, and when he prayed for her baby she had her handkerchief up to her eyes, just like she was crying. I bet she liked it, though.

Well, the next Sunday they asked the girls' class to be the mother of the Cradle Roll. So they hustled out, and every few Sundays they get hold of a new baby's name and bring it in. Whenever they hear of a new baby what isn't a Baptist nor a Presbyterian nor anything but just a M. E. or a nothing-at-all, then they rush right over and get its name. They got one little feller when he was only one day old.

Lots of times the Sunday when a new baby is enrolled the father and mother bring it to Sunday-school so we can see our newest member. Then the superintendent has them bring it up in front and we all say:

"Welcome precious baby  
To our Cradle roll.  
Here a place is waiting  
For each tiny soul.  
"On the earth our Saviour  
Little children blessed,  
In his arms he took them,  
Held them to his breast.  
"Still he calls them to him,  
No one is too small,  
For the tender Saviour  
Loves and wants us all."

Then Brother Parker prays for the baby and its home.

It seemed kind of queer when Mrs. Jim Johnson brought their baby, 'cause, you know, Jim is a saloon-keeper. 'Course she had to come alone, 'cause he wouldn't come with her. A woman has to go alone lots of times if she marries that kind of a feller.

But she came, and Brother Parker prayed for the whole family. We didn't think it would do much good to pray for Jim, but it did. You see, the little baby died after a while, and Jim, he just cried like he was a baby himself. He locked up his saloon, put crape on the door, and sent for Brother Parker.

They had the funeral in the church. The girls what had got the baby to join all sat on the front seat and cried and cried. The school sent lots of flowers, and there was the Cradle Roll hanging on the wall, with a white rosebud pinned to the card that had Baby Johnson's name on it.

Brother Parker talked about the little rosebud that had been transplanted from the thorny hillside of this life to God's sunny garden above, and

how we must all trust in Jesus, so as to meet her there.

Well, sir, that night Jim Johnson was converted. Brother Parker says so, and he was down there when it happened. Jim never did open his saloon again. The fellers said he hauled all his booze down to the creek one night and poured it in. Anyhow, he joined the church and went to work for the butcher, and his wife comes to Sunday-school regular now.

You know when a baby joins the Cradle Roll the school gives them a certificate to show that they belong. Well, sir, I heard Brother Parker tell mother that Mrs. Johnson has got that certificate all framed and hung under the baby's picture on the parlor wall. I guess she is glad our Sunday-school had a Cradle Roll.

Of course there's lots more about our Cradle Roll, and I'll tell you some more about it next time.

## CHAPTER XVI

### MORE CRADLE ROLL

When I quit writing last time I hadn't told near all there is to tell about our Cradle Roll. So I planned to tell some more this time. But I didn't suppose I'd have another kind of a Cradle Roll to tell about, too.

You see it was this way: Uncle Jim,—the one that my little brother is named for,—got awful sick about a month ago, and mother had to go over to Mustang to take care of him, because he lives all alone. Father said he was going along to do the chores, so they had to take us kids.

We was over there two weeks and I learned lots of things. On Sunday father and I and little Jim went to the Congregational Sunday-school. They haven't got any of that kind in our town, but it was an all-right school, only the class that I went in had a regular old dry stick for a teacher. Some day I'll tell you about him and the circus he had with the kids.



Now I only want to tell you about their Cradle Roll. It was a dandy. What do you suppose it was made of? A window curtain. Only the roller was fastened down below somehow, and a string run up over a hook or something, so that they unrolled it up and rolled it up down.

The names was all printed on it in those big letters like Mr. Jenkins makes pasteboard signs and prices with down to his grocery, and you could read them clear down the aisle. The boys' names was all in one row and the girls' in another, and I heard them talking that the girls of the school must try to find some more girl babies, because the boys' side was the fullest.

Then there was things pasted on right by some of the names—pictures, they were. Some was a train of cars cut out of the back of a magazine. Some was gilt stars, and there was two names that had an angel cut out of the quarterly and pasted after them.

I asked father what they was for, and he said he didn't know, but he would ask the superintendent. When the superintendent came along and shook hands father asked him, and he said the trains was for babies that had moved away,

and they still kept their names, and marked them that way. He said the stars meant that those babies had grown up and been promoted into the Beginners' Class, and the angels were by the names of two little babies that had gone to heaven, "where their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." Father said he would see if we couldn't put Baby Johnson's name back on our Cradle Roll and mark it with an angel, and I say so too.

There's one thing about Cradle Rolls; you've got to look after the babies. You can't just let them go. Over to Whacker Johnson's school, if they've got any Cradle Roll I bet the babies don't know they're on it. Having a whole class to look after our Cradle Roll keeps things lively. The girls are always going to see their babies, as they call them, and begging the mothers if they can't take them out in their buggies.

When any baby gets big enough to go to Sunday-school the girls are always ready to go around and get him and take care of him if his mother can't come too. And the mothers are more willing to let them come, because you see the baby has belonged to the school for a long time,

and has lots of friends there. He isn't just joining for the first time, but is being promoted from one grade to the next. The Cradle Roll is just the first grade.



*"The girls are always going to see the babies."*

Then the girls keep track of the birthdays, and whenever a baby's birthday comes around they send him a birthday card, or a flower, or some-

thing. One year they wrote birthday notes on little doll writing paper, in doll envelopes, and they addressed them to the babies and mailed them in the post-office. Of course, they put "care of" and the father's name on the outside. They sent one of them to my little brother Jim. That was just before he started into the little red-chair class. Mother just cried when it came in the mail, and she's got it yet, put away upstairs in a box in the top drawer of the bureau, along with a little pair of his worn-out shoes and a little baby gold ring that somebody gave him once.

We've got a birthday box at our school, too. Of course it's for big folks as well as for kids, but when a Cradle Roller has had a birthday they have its father and mother bring it the next Sunday, with as many pennies in its little fist as it is years old, and they take him up in front and have him drop them in the bank. Then, while they stand there, we all say:

"Many happy returns of the day of thy birth,  
May sunshine and gladness be given,  
And may the dear Saviour prepare thee on earth  
For a beautiful birthday in heaven."

We've said that for some babies whose folks never come to church any other time.

Then there was the baby social that they had once. The girls took care of all the babies in one room while the mothers visited together in the other room, only they would keep jumping up, first one and then another, to run and peek in the door to see if their babies was all right.

The girls had fixed up some cradles for the sleepy babies, and some big red worsted balls and cloth dolls for the wide-awake babies. While the mothers ate their ice-cream the babies had animal crackers and milk, and they all said they had the loveliest time,—that is, the mothers did,—and I guess the babies did too. Now every one of those babies but three is in our Beginners' Class, and those three moved away. I tell you, a baby roll pays.

## CHAPTER XVII



**A**BOUT a month ago they had a house visitation canvass in our town. The churches all clubbed together and the people divided off in pairs, folks from different churches going together.

They went to every house in town, and asked them who lived there, where they went to church and Sunday-school, or what one they would go to if they should start. Those that didn't go anywhere they tried to get to promise to start, and if they said they couldn't, then they talked Home Department to them.

I didn't think it would do much good, and Brother Parker didn't either. He said he knew everybody in town, and that he had got every-



body to come that would come. But when those papers that they made out came back and the preachers and superintendents met to look them over together, Brother Parker said he was surprised. He said there was M. E. folks on that list that had never let on to him that they was M. E.'s, and he was going to see after them.

There was twenty-six that promised to start to our school and ten promised to join our Home Department. There was more still for the other churches. The Presbyterians had forty promise to join the school, and the Baptists, what haven't had any Home Department, had thirty-seven promise to join one if they would start it.

You just ought to see the way our Sunday-school is going after those thirty-six that promised to come. You see, some of them forget it and we have to help them keep their promise. First they appointed a welcoming committee to be at the door and make the new ones welcome. They didn't have this committee the first Sunday after the house visitation; didn't believe any new ones would come, I guess. But they did come. Two little Davis girls came from over east of the track. Brother Parker was



busy up in front when they came in and nobody paid any attention to them. They stood round a while and then went home. They told their folks that the women what had invited them and said people would be glad to see them didn't mean a word of it. Now they say they won't try it again. I tell you, you've got to show folks that you're glad to see them if you want them to come again.

There can't anybody come into our Sunday-school now without getting spoken to, 'cause there's the welcoming committee just inside the door.

Then we've got another one called a hunting-up committee. It is to hunt up the ones that forget to come. The welcoming committee keeps track for them of who comes and who doesn't. Then the next week the hunting-up committee goes to see what was the matter, and they keep on going till they get them, just like that life insurance man did to my father. One place where they thought the people stayed away 'cause they didn't want to come, they found the father and mother both sick in bed and the kids never had a thing to eat.

And there's lots of other things that they're doing these days. Of course Brother Parker is hustling round all the time, but he makes the others work, too.

There's the Ladies' Aid. My father says some aid societies ought to be called hindrance societies, for they do more harm than good. They're all the time begging money like the church was a pauper and couldn't pay its own bills, or else they're running competition to the restaurant with a supper or to the dry goods store with a bazaar, and teaching people that they can't afford to give to the Lord unless they get their money's worth right back in candy or fancy work. He says it makes "loaves-and-fishes" Christians and that kind will never spread foreign missions much.

Then he says the women work so hard getting up Fourth of July dinners and election suppers that they don't have any strength left for the real work of the church, like calling on the sick, going to prayer-meeting, and teaching in Sunday-school. But our Ladies' Aid isn't like that. They meet every Friday afternoon at the church. Brother Parker meets with them and

gives each two of them a slip of paper with two or three names of families that they are to call on and invite to our church. They pray a while that God will bless them and their calls that day, and then they all go out and make the calls. The next week they tell about their last calls and then take new slips and go to see other families. Since they started doing that way our church won't hardly hold the people that come, and Brother Parker says the collections never was so big before. Isn't that a real *aid* society?

We have gained twenty new ones in our Sunday-school since the house visitation and Mrs. Smith has got the ten that promised to join the Home Department. Everything is just going on fine.

It isn't just our church either. They're all on the boom since the house visitation. Of course they're each working for the folks what naturally belong to them, but they never would have known about all that did belong to them if they hadn't all joined together in that house visitation.

Once a month the teachers and officers from

all the Sunday-schools meet on Sunday afternoon to talk about their work and ask each other how they are getting along. They have Cradle Roll reports, talks about old church letters, about how many new scholars they have got since last time, and about Home Departments. When the Baptists heard the other folks telling how much good the Home Department was, they finally started it, and now they've got a fine one.

That's the way every church is helping every other church now in our town, and old man Rose says if the churches are going to quit fighting each other and love each other instead, he's going to start going to church for maybe there is something in it after all.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### SINGING

We've got a new superintendent at last. I don't guess we ever would have if the old superintendent hadn't died. Of course we was all sorry to have him die, and they gave a mighty big funeral, and said as how the church would miss him, but I think it's going to be a great thing for the school.

As soon as our class heard that the old superintendent was dead we began talking about our man for the new superintendent. Everybody we talked to said, "Why, that's so, we hadn't thought of him." So last month he was elected. My, but we was glad.

His name is Mr. Holcomb, and he runs the lumber yard. He isn't much for looks, but I tell you he's sharp. You can't fool him, and he is for every good thing that comes along. Maybe we can even have a blackboard now.

He's been superintendent four Sundays and the first thing he did was to wake up the music.

It needed it, all right. I just can't tell you how bad our singing was. It was just dry.

The old superintendent always picked out the pieces and it seemed like he tried to get the slowest, pokiest, draggiest pieces in the whole book. I just believe a fast piece would have seemed wicked to him. Then there never was any leader for it. Everybody just did as he pleased. Some sang loud, some sang soft, some sang slow and the rest sang slower, and a whole lot of us never tried to sing at all. What was the use?

Then he most always picked out the same pieces every Sunday. You give me three guesses any Sunday morning and I could have told you what he would have given out first.

The first thing Mr. Holcomb did was to appoint a leader and tell him to wake us all up, and when the leader can't make us sing lively enough Mr. Holcomb pitches in and helps stir things.

The leader stands up in front and leads off. Sometimes he sings loud. Sometimes he just stands and listens and smiles. Sometimes he beats time or slaps his book or stamps his foot



and just scowls like everything. That's when we sing too slow or don't keep together.

I tell you things have to move some now. Mr. Holcomb says when we praise the Lord we ought to do it as if we was just running over with joy, like you feel when the band plays "Red, White and Blue." That's my kind, singing that makes you feel like marching and doing something hard.

Then they began giving out new pieces that none of us knowed. We couldn't sing them, and I for one didn't try. But that week they had all the girls between nine and fourteen years meet and practise the new pieces, and the next Sunday there the girls was, all stuck up in the corner for a choir. The Junior Choir they call them, and when we tackled a new piece that day it sounded just like an old one, only not all worn out.

The leader makes you sing, too. You can't get out of it. He has the choir sing alone sometimes till everybody just can't hardly wait to join in. Then maybe he will have the Bible class sing a verse, then the young ladies' class, and so on. The first time he called on our class



only one feller tried it, and he just gave a squawk like a sick chicken and then sat down quick. I ain't going to tell you who that feller was, but my, how they did laugh. We can sing them all right now, though.

Then he makes us think what we are singing about. He says you've got to sing one song one way and another song another way, according to the words. A marching song he has us sing all standing up and holding our heads up high. But for a prayer song we all sit still and bow our heads and sing soft. Sometimes he says, "We're going to sing this prayer song into the ear of Jesus." I tell you it gets mighty still then, just before we begin to sing.

We don't sing all new songs either. Mr. Holcomb says most folks are just fairly married to a hymn-book these days, and that we want to break loose and have some songs that we know and can sing anywhere. He started in to teach us "Blessed Assurance," and it didn't take but two Sundays till we could sing it clear through with all the books shut. Now we are learning "Joy to the World," and we pretty near know that already from last Christmas.

I like to sing without the book. It seems natural and free like. Mr. Holcomb says you never know when you may want to sing. He says when our old superintendent was dying he asked them to sing something, and not one of them could think of a single thing without the books and they was all locked up in the church. Finally the old man himself started up "There is a Fountain filled with blood," and sang it all through alone, 'cause the rest of them was crying so they couldn't join in. Mr. Holcomb says he is going to see that none of us ever get caught like that.

We certainly have good singing these days and it makes Sunday-school interesting, I tell you. Best of all, Mr. Holcomb says if some of us boys will learn to play instruments we will have a Sunday-school orchestra. Wouldn't that be great?

## CHAPTER XIX

### TEACHERS'-MEETING

When I was a kid mother used to take me with her to teachers'-meeting sometimes, when there was any, 'cause father couldn't leave the store. That teachers'-meeting was tough. It was tough on a feller to sit there all the time with nothing much going on. And it was tough in another way, 'cause they couldn't kill it. But they couldn't keep it alive much of the time either. It had more lives than a black cat and more deaths than the feller in the show that gets shot every night. I was always glad when it was dead, 'cause then I didn't have to go.

There was only a few that tried to keep it up. The rest of them said they was so busy and there was so many other things going on, and they lived so far from the church, and they was so tired when night came, and they couldn't get off from the store, and a lot of other reasons, that they just couldn't come. But I noticed that when there was a band concert Saturday

night the women was about all on hand visiting all over the park, and when there was a baseball game the men got off from the store, all right. I believe they were all just like me, they didn't want to go to teachers'-meeting 'cause it was so dry.

They tried all sorts of schemes to get the people to come. They mixed the prayer-meeting and the teachers'-meeting together a while. That seemed like it would work all right, but by and by it was as bad as ever. Then they had the prayer-meeting first and the teachers'-meeting right afterward. That was a little better but lots of the teachers didn't come even then.

Next they had teachers'-meeting only once a month. They didn't try to study the lessons much, but they talked about how to make the Sunday-school better and all that. It might have worked all right only it was so long between meetings that even the preacher would forget when it came round and lots of times didn't give it out in the pulpit and so nobody would come. That was before Brother Parker came here.

When Brother Parker first came he didn't say anything about teachers'-meeting for a while. But one Sunday morning he gave out that on Tuesday night there would be a reception to all the teachers and officers of the Sunday-school. He said that no set of workers did more for the success of the church than the officers and teachers in the Sunday-school, and that the church ought to do them honor. He said the church officers would be there to receive them and for every teacher to be sure to come.

Of course mother went and father even got off from the store and went too. You just know I was there, 'cause I wanted to see what it was going to be like. I guess all the teachers felt about the same way for there was only one absent and she was sick.

They had the best time that night, not a bit like the old dry teachers'-meetings they used to have; but it was some like a teachers'-meeting, too.

After the teachers had all come in and shaken hands with Brother Parker and Mrs. Parker and the stewards of the church, and the Mrs. Stewards, and all the rest of the committee by

the door, and all walked around and shook hands with each other, and began to look like a party, Brother Parker got up and told them to take seats for a program. And I tell you it was a good one.

One of the stewards read a paper about the beginning of the Sunday-school, all about that



*"All walked around and shook hands  
with each other."*

feller that started the first one, and how the people called him Bobby Wild-goose. Then father was on to tell what a hard time they had starting our school when Oklahoma first opened. He, used to live here then, before he got mar-



ried and moved to Texas. He told how they met under a tree the first Sunday, and then in a tent and then the blacksmith shop right across from where the church is now.

The superintendent (that was before the old one died, you know), he told about three of the boys that used to belong to this school and now one of them is superintendent of a Sunday-school down by the Big Pasture, one of them is taking the Conference Course to be a minister like Brother Parker, and what do you think? The other one is a really-truly missionary in India. The superintendent showed us his picture and read us a letter from him.

Brother Parker asked if we couldn't have that picture to frame and hang in the church. The superintendent said he hated to give it up, but he would, for maybe it would make some other boy in that school want to be a missionary.

Then Brother Parker gave what he called snap shots at the next Sunday's lesson. It was fine. Why he made it as interesting as if it was a real story instead of just a lesson. Finally they all stood up and sang "Blest be the Tie



that Binds," and then Brother Parker said that every Tuesday night they would have just such a meeting of all teachers and officers of the Sunday-school and church at the parsonage, and he wanted every one to know that they will have a good time if they come and be missed if they stay away. Then he prayed for them all and we came home.

He gave it out again Sunday in Sunday-school and church, and I was thinking about it all Tuesday afternoon wondering if it would be as good as the first one, and hoping that if it was, it wouldn't die like the old kind did. And, sir, it never has died yet. Every week we seem to have a better time than before and the teachers come as regular as they do to Sunday-school. I guess the trouble before was that they didn't want to come; didn't like it.

I can't tell you all they do have in that teachers'-meeting because they have something different all the time. I don't see how Brother Parker thinks of all the things that they have. I guess he must study on it as hard as he does on his sermons. It isn't like a meeting, either, but more like a sociable. They all shake hands

around and talk when they first come in and tell how glad they are to see each other, like as if they hadn't met for a year.

Then Brother Parker has them all pull their chairs up together in a circle where they can all see and hear each other. They generally have something read first, either an essay by somebody or a chapter out of some book on Sunday-school teaching, and some of those books are right interesting. Then they talk about how to make our Sunday-school better. It isn't a bit like a meeting for they all talk as if they like to. It's more like us fellers when we go fishing all day, and 'long after dinner we set our poles in the bank and just lie round under a tree and say what we think.

After they have talked a while then they take their Bibles and Brother Parker gives them some more snap shots at the next lesson. He doesn't regularly teach it, verse by verse. He just picks out the interesting spots and makes you see things that you never knew was in the Bible, real things about real heroes what did things. I tell you it's great. He asks the teachers lots of queer questions and makes them think. You

see they have to study before they come, and he studies it a heap, too.

Then he shows them how to teach. When I first came to this school our teacher wasn't much good. She meant all right but it was always the same old thing, just reading the questions out of the quarterly. You remember how I told about all the things she does now? Well, she learned them all in that teachers'-meeting. And so do the other teachers. About every good thing in our school was hatched up in the teachers'-meeting.

What do you suppose they do after Brother Parker has finished the snap shots? They all kneel down and pray right round the circle. Some of them can't pray very long prayers but they all say something. Sometimes they sing something while they all kneel there, like "Where he leads me I will follow," and one night after they had all said good by and gone on down the street, lots of them were humming soft-like, "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord."

There isn't any trouble with our teachers'-meeting any more, because they all like to come.

You see it is interesting and makes them feel good. I don't believe that kind of a teachers'-meeting could die.

## CHAPTER XX

### DECISION DAY

Do you know what a decision day is? I didn't know there was such a thing till lately, but I do now, all right, and I don't believe I'll ever forget it if I live to be as old as Methuselah. It's a good thing, all right, if it does make you feel kind of measly while you're going through it. We had one last month and it was the best thing our school ever did.

They got it started in teachers'-meeting one night, talking about how there was lots of boys and girls in the Sunday-school what wasn't real Christians. They didn't mean that we don't believe the Bible. 'Course we know that's all true. But they seemed to think it took something more than that.

Brother Parker asked each teacher to bring his class-book to teachers'-meeting the next week and be ready to tell which names was Christians and which wasn't. Then they got down and

prayed all round, and they mostly prayed mighty plain about us fellers what hadn't made any start yet. They seemed to think it was mighty dangerous to put it off.

I kind of forgot about it that week till mother went to get her class-book to take to teachers'-meeting. Then I didn't know what to do. I wanted to be there so as to know what they did, but I didn't want to hear my teacher read my name out. So finally I hid out. When mother got home that night it was 'way late and her eyes was red like she had been to a funeral. I guess 'twas about me.

I didn't go to any more teachers'-meetings for a while, but they kept them right up and finally one week they had one every night, and I guess they must have talked about what to do. I know things began to happen all at once.

Friday afternoon right after school father took me fishing and we stayed till dark. 'Long about sundown, when we was sitting alongside of each other on the bank and it was all still, what do you think he said? He says: "My boy, I wish you were an active Christian." I never said nothing; couldn't for a lump in my

throat. And I guess he had a lump, too, because he never said nothing more. Pretty soon we wound up our lines and started home, and he put his arm through mine like men do and we walked clear home that way and never said a word. But I know what he was thinking about.

Saturday noon I got a letter from my teacher, like as if it was my birthday. I tell you she can sure write a fine letter. I read mine three times out in the barn, and I've got it yet. She said about the same thing father did, only more of it.

That night when mother got home from teachers'-meeting and I was in bed, she came in to see if I was covered up. She tucked me in and patted me a little like she used to when I was a little kid, and then she sat on the edge of the bed and told me about when I was born, how she and father gave me to God, and how they used to pray together over my little bed, and how they had always prayed that I might become a real earnest Christian while I was young. She told me the next day was to be Decision Day in the Sunday-school and we was all going to have a chance to make a start, and she



was so anxious for me to do it. Then she kissed me and kneeled down and prayed for me. I just had to cover up my head, but I was awful glad she did it.

The next morning Sunday-school wasn't like it had ever been before. Everybody seemed to be expecting something. They opened with "Stand up, stand up for Jesus," and just before the lesson they sang, "Just as I am, without one plea." And they had lots of short prayers from the teachers and they was all about the same thing. You know what that was.

Our teacher almost forgot the lesson about the children of Israel being slaves in Egypt, and spent most all the time telling us how awful it was to be a slave to sin and how Jesus was the only one that could lead us out. She told us how she had been praying ever since she took the class that every one of her boys might be converted, and that Jesus wanted it lots worse than she did.

Then she says, "Some of you boys have already chosen Christ as your Saviour. Won't you tell us when and how you did it?" She waited a little bit and looked at Bert Thomas.

Finally he told how he came to start, and it didn't seem so hard. Then Fred Keller, he told about it too, and how he prays every morning, and how Jesus seems to help him. I bet teacher told them fellers beforehand to be ready. But it was all right. They are a heap better than I am.

Then our teacher says, "Boys, Brother Parker is going to give the rest of you a chance this morning to make the same start that Bert and Fred have made, and accept the same Saviour. But we don't need to wait. Let's decide it right here in the class, and then when Brother Parker gives the call it will be easy, for it will be all settled. Won't you do it?"

I guess she saw we looked almost ready, for she says, "Let's all bow our heads and close our eyes and make our decision for God's eyes alone." Then she says, "All of you who do this day confess that you have sinned against God, that you are truly sorry for your sins, and who do put your trust in Jesus Christ and accept him as your Saviour and your King, hold up your hands." We all held our eyes shut, but I heard the feller next to me move like he was putting his up, and I did, too. Then we all opened our

eyes, and every feller had his hand up, even Bulldog Jones, and teacher was just crying 'cause she was so glad, you know, and we was all glad, too. Just then the bell rang, and we came to order.

Instead of reports and things that day, Brother Parker got up and made a talk, and while he talked he was putting this on our new blackboard:

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|            |            |            |
|------------|------------|------------|
| Joseph     | Moses      | Jesus      |
| Saved      | Saved      | Saves      |
| His Family | His Nation | His People |
| From       | From       | From       |
| Starvation | Slavery    | Sin        |

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After he had talked about it a little bit he had us all say together, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." "Now," he says, "who are his people?" and father hollered right out, "Who-soever will, bless God." "Yes," says Brother Parker, "as many as received him, to them gave

he power to become the sons of God." How many of you young people will receive Jesus as your Saviour to-day? Come and give me your hand."

Then he began to sing again, soft-like, "Just as I am, I come, I come." I was so happy I just couldn't wait, so I went right up, and when I got there all the rest of our class was there too, and lots from the other classes. We all kneeled down, while Brother Parker prayed for us, and then he told us all to come to a special meeting at three o'clock.

That afternoon we was all there, and he never let us go till he had talked with every one of us, and we had each said we believed Jesus was our Saviour, and that we would stick to him. Then he prayed that God would help us to be faithful, and let us go. You see, he don't believe in doing anything half-way, Brother Parker don't.

I can't stop to tell you about the meetings Brother Parker has with us every Friday afternoon after school. He tells us what it means to be a Christian, about joining the church, what our church believes, and why, and all about it. He has us pray, too, out loud. Then we all plan

to get more boys and girls into our Sunday-school and get them converted.

I tell you, I am glad we had decision day in our school. I meant what I did that day, and I am going to stick to it. Won't you do it, too?

Good-by,

PUCKER.











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